

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A leather-like sheet substrate comprising a fiber-entangled nonwoven fabric that comprises a microfine fiber bundle (A) and a microfine fiber bundle (B) in a blending ratio (A)/(B) of 30/70 to 70/30 by mass and a polymeric elastomer contained in the fiber-entangled nonwoven fabric, the microfine fiber bundle (A) comprising 10 to 100 microfine fibers each of which has a single fiber fineness of 0.5 dtex or less and which are made of an elastic polymer having a JIS A hardness of 90 to 97, and the microfine fiber bundle (B) comprising a microfine fiber which has a single fiber fineness of 0.5 dtex or less and which is made of a non-elastic polymer.

2. (Currently Amended) The leather-like sheet substrate according to claim 1, wherein the microfine fibers in the microfine fiber bundle (A) inside the leather-like sheet substrate partially stick to each other, such that the elastic microfine fibers in the microfine fiber bundle (A) laterally stick together while keeping their original fibrous shape, and that the sticking length is 2/3 or less of the fiber diameter when measured on a cross section perpendicular to the lengthwise direction of fibers.

3. (Original) The leather-like sheet substrate according to claim 1, wherein a powder having an average particle size of 0.1 to 5 μm is present at least between the microfine fibers in the microfine fiber bundle (A).

4. (Currently Amended) The leather-like sheet substrate according to claim 1, which is made into a suede-finished leather-like sheet by raising the microfine fibers on a surface of the leather-like sheet substrate.

5. (Currently Amended) The leather-like sheet substrate according to claim 4, wherein raised single fibers each made of the microfine fiber in the microfine fiber bundle (A) do not ~~substantially~~ stick to each other.

6. (Currently Amended) The leather-like sheet substrate according to claim 1, which is made into a grained leather-like sheet by forming a resin film on a surface of the leather-like sheet substrate.

7. (Withdrawn; Currently Amended) A process for producing a leather-like sheet substrate according to claim 1, comprising at least the following (1) to (6):

(1) producing a microfine fiber-forming fiber (A') capable of forming a microfine fiber bundle (A) comprising 10 to 100 microfine fibers each of which has a single fiber fineness of 0.5 dtex or less and which are made of an elastic polymer having a JIS A hardness of 90 to 97;

(2) producing a microfine fiber-forming fiber (B') capable of forming a microfine fiber bundle (B) comprising microfine fibers each of which has a single fiber fineness of 0.5 dtex or less and which are made of a non-elastic polymer;

(3) producing a fiber-entangled nonwoven fabric (A) by blending the microfine fiber-forming fiber (A') and the microfine fiber-forming fiber (B') so that a blending ratio of the microfine fiber bundle (A) to the microfine fiber bundle (B) is 30/70 to 70/30 by mass when the microfine fiber-forming fibers (A') and (B') are made into the microfine ~~fibers~~ bundles in (6), thereby producing a web, and by three-dimensionally entangling the web;

(4) producing a fiber-entangled nonwoven fabric (B) by heat-shrinking the fiber-entangled nonwoven fabric (A) at 85°C or higher;

(5) impregnating a polymeric elastomer into the fiber-entangled nonwoven fabric (B);
and

(6) making the microfine fiber-forming fiber (A') and the microfine fiber-forming fiber (B') into the microfine fibers to form the microfine fiber bundle (A) and the microfine fiber bundle (B).

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 2 and 4-7 have been amended.

The amendment of Claims 2 and 4-7 is supported by the originally filed claims and the specification at pages 3-21, for example at page 13, line 27 to page 14, line 3, page 20, lines 11-13, and page 20, lines 20-21.

No new matter has been added by the present amendment.